

Felling the gigantic, old bur oak at Big Oak Tree State Park October 27, 1954



We believe these people are: (standing on ground, from left) J.R. "Sonny" Bard, Dick Anderson, Alfred Tidwell and ??? Standing on the picnic table are Stan Brown with his father Wallace Brown.

By Liz Anderson

We ran these photographs in The East Prairie Eagle last week and had quite a response. We think we may have identified most of the men pictured.

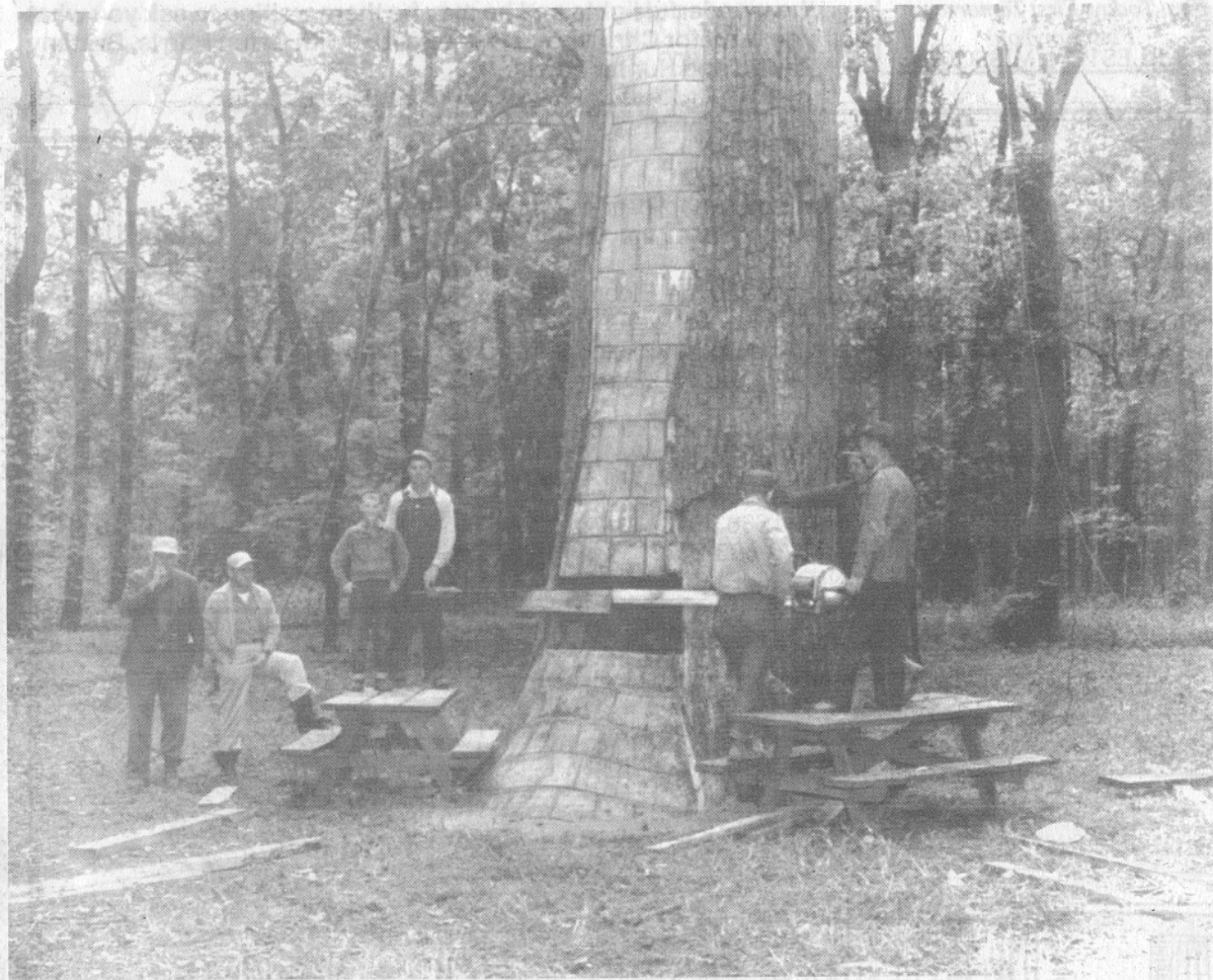
Many of the same men and boys are in the different photographs. We think the same boy standing on the picnic table is the same one standing on the tree. We think he is Stan Brown, son of Wallace Brown, the Mr. Brown mentioned on the back of the photographs.

The man standing by the felled tree was identified as Dave Leech, by Dorothy Bradley. He was her father.

One man in two of the photographs was identified as Alfred Tidwell by several people.

Mr. Bard was identified as J.R. "Sonny" Bard, uncle of Joe Brown, another son of Wallace Brown, who was in the Army when the photo was taken in 1954. He came into the office Tuesday, after another brother had called him from Indiana after seeing the photographs in The Eagle.

These photos of the felling of the old bur oak for which Big Oak Tree State Park was named came to us from Buck Farmer via Rick Reed. If anyone knows the unknown people, please call 683-3351.



FROM THE BACK OF ONE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

"Cutting the world's largest Burr Oak Tree located at the time in 3 States Timber tract, now known as 'Big Oak State Park'. 2 timber cutters who operated the 9 1/2 ft. saw that was used to fell the tree. The saw was a Mercury-Diston furnished by Charleston Tractor and Implement Co., Ford Tractor dealer, Charleston, Mo. Bard and Brown are shown holding the saw. Dick Anderson, standing to the left with his foot on the picnic table, is our salesman who helped organize the activity."



We are still missing the names of some of the men and one of the boys pictured. If you can help, please call 683-3351.

Dave Leech, left, was standing next to the fallen bur oak tree. Standing on the tree is Stan Brown, son of Wallace Brown, one of the two timber cutters. The other young man sitting atop the tree has not been identified. He is not Chuck Davis, although apparently another photograph of Mr. Davis and the fallen giant was circulated when the tree was cut.



The late Joe Webb is photographed photographing the fall of the giant bur oak.

Kathryn Webb remembers the battle to save the tract of timber

Kathryn Webb reminded us of the activity in Mississippi County during the 1930s as the tract of land was acquired by the state. At that time, she worked for Judge McDowell in Charleston and the telephone activity was amazing, with calls coming from the Governor's office.

She said the Three States Lumber Co. was going to cut the last tract of virgin oak timber in the area, and the Governor and others were trying to get the land out of their hands.

"This was an historic event in 1936 or '37," she said. "These were the largest oak specimens in the state."

"I know the phones were ringing from Jefferson City to Charleston until the state bought it," she added.

Mrs. Webb said she never knew who took the photograph of Joe taking the picture. A large copy of the photograph, belonging to *The East Prairie Eagle*, is now on display at the Mississippi County Historical Museum, along with a deteriorating slab from the tree itself.



DISPLAY AT THE MISSISSIPPI COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM IN EAST PRAIRIE PHOTOGRAPHED SATURDAY DURING THE OPEN HOUSE.

